

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 SSM-03 ACDA-12
OMB-01 CCO-00 MCT-01 CU-04 OPR-02 A-01 SY-05
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5493

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T AMMAN 2630

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, JO, LE, IS

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN REACTION TO SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION

REF (A) AMMAN 2601, (B) AMMAN 2511 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY- JORDANIAN PUBLIC REACTION TO SOUTHERN LEBANON SITUATION HAS BEEN HEATED. STIRRED BY STORIES IN PRESS OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND GENERAL FRUSTRATION REGARDING SOUTHERN LEBANON, THERE WERE SOME SCATTERED DEMONSTRATIONS MARCH 20 AND SOME ISOLATED INCIDENTS IN PALESTINIAN CAMPS, ALTHOUGH JORDANIAN SECURITY REACTED QUICKLY TO SUPPRESS ANY DISORDER AND GOJ SECURITY OFFICIALS ASSURE US SECURITY SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL. ALTHOUGH U.S. SPONSORED UNSC RESOLUTION HAS PROBABLY HELPED, U.S. IS STILL OBJECT OF ANGER AND WE EXPECT PUBLIC TEMPER WILL BE SHORT UNTIL FIGHTING STOPS IN SOUTH LEBANON AND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL GETS STARTED. END SUMMARY.

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2. KING HUSSEIN IN HIS RECENT SPEECH FORESAW POPULAR REACTION TO SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION AND WE BELIEVE SPEECH WAS PARTLY INTENDED TO ANTICIPATE AND DEFUSE THIS REACTION. WE JUDGE THAT RAPID UNSC ACTION, IN WHICH U.S. SEEN TO TAKE LEAD, HAS ALSO DONE MUCH TO ATTENUATE FRUSTRATION AMONG INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN JORDAN.

3. HOWEVER, FEELINGS OF ORDINARY PALESTINIANS, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN CAMPS, RUNNING HIGH AGAINST ISRAEL, AND TO SOME EXTENT, U.S. JORDANIAN SECURITY SERVICES ENGAGED MARCH 20 IN MONITORING AND CONTAINING PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF ANGER, WITH SOME FORCE BEING USED IN PALESTINIAN CAMP AREAS ON OUTSKIRTS OF AMMAN (WAHDAT AND ASHFRAFIYYA). THERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS IN JORDAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS CONDEMNING ISRAELI ATTACKS AND U.S. FOR SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO ISRAEL, AND CALLING FOR RETALIATION AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS IN MIDDLE EAST. SECURITY SERVICES DID NOT ENTER CAMPUS TO STOP DEMONSTRATIONS, BUT STOPPED OTHER INCIPIENT DEMONSTRATIONS BY SYNDICATES OF LAWYERS, ENGINEERS, ETC. WE HAVE REPORTS TODAY OF SEVERAL GATHERINGS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO SERVE AS NUCLEI FOR DEMONSTRATION AT EMBASSY. SECURITY SERVICES FORCED THESE TO DISPERSE AND AUGMENTED SECURITY AT EMBASSY AS A PRECAUTION. DEMONSTRATIONS REACHED A PEAK IN MID-MORNING BUT SUBSIDED LATER IN DAY AND WE UNDERSTAND POLICE HAVE REDUCED FORCES IN SOME OF THE CAMPS.

4. WE UNDERSTAND BODY OF PLO ACTIVIST JIHAD CARLOS KILLED IN LEBANON ARRIVED IN AMMAN LAST NIGHT FOR FUNERAL RITES BY HIS FAMILY. THIS, TOGETHER WITH HEAVY PRESS COVERAGE OF FIGHTING IN LEBANON ACCENTING LEBANESE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES,
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IS WORKING ON PUBLIC EMOTIONS. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND HEAVIER HAND HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO KEEP ORDER IN CAMPS. IT LIKELY THAT SECURITY SERVICES WILL ALLOW SOME WORKING OFF OF EMOTIONS, BUT WILL CONTINUE TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPOSE STRICT LIMITS ON PUBLIC MANIFESTATIONS OF REACTION TO LEBANESE EVENTS. LOCAL SECURITY FIGURES WE HAVE CONTACTED HAVE ASSURED US THAT SECURITY SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL. NEVERTHELESS, EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO AVOID CROWDS AND BE CAUTIOUS IN THEIR MOVEMENTS. WE WILL BE MONITORING SITUATION CLOSELY IN CASE THERE IS RECURRENCE OF MANIFESTATIONS TOMORROW.

5. COMMENT - WE UNDERSTAND LOCAL STRINGER FOR WASHINGTON POST IS FILING STORY ON DEMONSTRATIONS AND WE EXPECT WIRE SERVICES MAY ALSO FILE SOMETHING. EMBASSY WISHES TO EMPHASIZE THAT PUBLIC MANIFESTATIONS HAVE BEEN LARGELY CONFINED TO REFUGEE CAMPS AND SITUATION DOWNTOWN NOW QUITE CALM. DEPARTMENT AND ADDRESSEES SHOULD THEREFORE TREAT WITH CAUTION MEDIA STORIES ON SITUATION, PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM PLO AND REJECTIONISTS MEDIA, WHICH GENERALLY TRY TO EXAGGERATE STORIES CONCERNING JORDANIAN INTERNAL SECURITY.

SUDDARTH

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Message Attributes

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